

REMARKS

Claims 10 and 12-14 and 16 are pending in the application. Claim 10 has been amended to further clarify the invention and define over the prior art. The Amendment to claim 10 does not introduce new matter.

Claims 10, 14 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Dunn (U.S. Pat. No. 5,193,426). Claims 12 and 13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dunn in view of Graf et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 3,448,645). The Examiner's rejections are respectfully traversed.

The punching machine according to the present invention is capable of advancing a workpiece (W), *during the punching operation*, in a first direction (X) by alternately operating a first positioning device (53) and a second positioning device (69), and furthermore, reversing the direction of the workpiece in an opposite direction by alternately operating the first positioning device and second positioning.

In other words, the workpiece (W) can be leftwardly shifted in Figs. 7A to 7D in a first direction (X) by alternate operation of the first positioning device and the second positioning device. In addition, after the above shifting operation, the workpiece can be rightwardly shifted in the first direction by alternate operation of the first positioning device and the second positioning device. Support for the above features can be found in the specification on page 12, paragraph 4 to page 13, paragraph 2.

The Examiner states that Dunn discloses a first clamp 106 and a second clamp 106a, and that the first and second clamps "alternately transfer the workpiece during the punching operation." The Examiner cites Figs. 8-10 to show that "positioning devices are separately and alternatively operable based upon the fact that each device is positioned on either side of the punch head with each side having a positioning motor (74)." The Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner's assertion. The figures alone do not show that the positioning devices operate during the punching operation, or that they operate "separately" or "alternatively." Furthermore, with respect to at least the punching devices operating separately and alternatively, this feature is not disclosed in the specification.

The Examiner further states that a positioning motor 74 is located on both sides of the punch head. However, Fig. 10 clearly shows only one motor 74. Dunn does not disclose a drive motor associated with a first positioning device and a second positioning device, nor does Dunn disclose drive motors that operate alternatively to move a workpiece. Therefore, it is believed that Dunn does not disclose the present invention as recited in the claims.

Furthermore, Graf et al. does not cure the deficiencies of Dunn, and therefore, claims 10 and 12-14 and 16 are also believed to be allowable over the combination of Dunn and Graf et al.

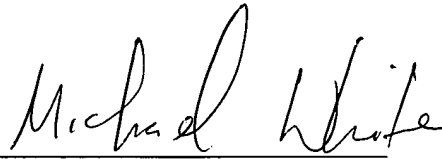

By the foregoing amendments and arguments, the Applicant believes that claims 10, 12-14 and 16 are now in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested. As all grounds of rejection have been addressed, entry of this Amendment and issuance of a Notice of Allowance of claims 10, 12-14 and 16 is respectfully solicited.

Should the Examiner believe anything further is desirable in order to place the application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's representative at the telephone number listed below.

Please charge any shortage or credit any overpayment of fees to BLANK ROME, LLP, Deposit Account No. 23-2185 (000004-00661). In the event that a petition for an extension of time is required to be submitted herewith and in the event that a separate petition does not accompany this response, Applicants hereby petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.36(a) for an extension of time for as many months as are required to render this submission timely. Any fee due is authorized above.

Respectfully submitted,

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